

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 MC-02 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5745

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 2045

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJ: REPLACEMENT FIGHTER : DELAY IN SCENARIO FOR
GON DECISION AND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

REF: THE HAGUE 1967 (NOTAL)

1. MOD INFORMATION DIRECTOR SLIGTING AND RNLAFF SOURCE
TELL US THERE WILL BE SOME DELAY IN GON DECISION
SCENARIO REPORTED REFTEL AS A RESULT OF REQUEST FROM
PRIMIN TINDEMANS TO PRIMIN DEN UYL FOR ANOTHER ROUND
OF BELGIAN-NETHERLANDS CONSULTATIONS. SINCE TINDE-
MANS AND FONMIN VAN ELSLANDE ARE NOT DUE BACK FROM
THEIR TRIP TO CHINA UNTIL THE END OF APRIL, SLIGTING
FORESSES MAY 6 AS THE EARLIEST DATE FOR THE MEETING,
WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE HELD IN BRUSSELS AND INCLUDE
FONMINS, DEFENSE MINISTERS, ECONOMICS AND FINANCE
MINISTERS, AS WELL AS THE PRIME MINISTERS OF THE TWO
COUNTRIES. (BECAUSE OF THE PRESS OF OTHER IMPORTANT
BUSINESS, DEN UYL DID NOT WANT TO POSTPONE THE REGULAR
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FRIDAY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON MAY 2 AND

MAY 5 WILL BE A NATIONAL HOLIDAY TO COMMEMORATE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS).

2. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WILL, AS SCHEDULED, DISCUSS THE PURCHASE OF THE F-16 AT ITS APRIL 25 MEETING BUT WILL NOT DO ANY MORE THAN EXPRESS A PREFERENCE FOR THE F-16. THE DUTCH REASONING IS THAT WITH TINDEMANS AND VAN ELSLANDE AWAY IT WOULD NOT BE PRUDENT FOR THE GON TO REACH A DECISION IN FAVOR OF THE F-16 WHICH VANDEN BOEYNANTS COULD USE DETRIMENTALLY. ASSUMING A BELGIAN-DUTCH MEETING ON MAY 6, SLIGTING BELIEVES THE GON WOULD ANNOUNCE ITS FINAL DECISION FOLLOWING THE MAY 9 CABINET MEETING. THE EARLIEST DATE FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE, HE THOUGHT, WOULD THEN BE MAY 15 WITH A GOOD CHANCE THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE TO SCHEDULE IT UNTIL LATE IN MAY. SLIGTING AGAIN WONDERED HOW THE US WOULD REACT IF THIS REVISED SCENARIO MADE IT NECESSARY TO DELAY THE SIGNING OF THE LETTER OF INTENT FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS, I.E., UNTIL JUNE 1.

3. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST: MAAG SOURCES ADVISE THAT THE NEXT CONSORTIUM STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HAS BEEN POSTPONED FROM APRIL 25 TO MAY 6 OR 7 AS A RESULT OF THE SCHEDULING OF THE BELGIAN-DUTCH MINISTERIAL MEETING REPORTED ABOVE. THE SAME SOURCE ALSO REPORT THAT THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR DELIVERED A STRONG NOTE TO DEN UYL APRIL 18 STATING THAT THE GOF COULD NOT ACCEPT DUTCH REFUSAL TO PURCHASE THE F-1 "UNDER THE PRETEXT OF A CHEAPER PRICE." FONOFF POLITICAL DIRECTOR CHARLES RUTTEN CONFIRMED THAT THE FRENCH WERE BEATING ON THE DUTCH DOOR PRACTICALLY EVERY DAY BUT HE GAVE SUCH LAST-MINUTE DEMARCHES SHORT SHRIFT.

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